Dick Nolan SFExaminer AUG 17 1975

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Official pressure to reopen Kennedy case

Now the Los Angeles Supervisors have decided that evidence in the Robert Kennedy assassination needs serious reexamination. They have instructed the County Counsel to join legal efforts to reopen the case.

For this you can credit Supervisor Baxter Ward, a former newsman who has pursued his own investigation of the Kennedy case with patient determination.

Ward is not satisfied with certain unresolved mysteries about the weapon fired by Sirhan Sirhan, the convicted assassin. These mysteries have arisen because expert criminalists have found serious discrepancies in the official police examination of the weapon and bullets said to have been fired from it. Bullets don't match. There is something wrong.

Neither Ward nor the criminalists, though, have come to the startling conclusion reached by the German magazine, *Der Stern* (The Star), after its own investigation of the case, "Sirhan did not kill Kennedy," the magazine headlined a lengthy article. "The real murderer is still free."

Stern interviewed District Attorney Joseph Busch, shortly before his recent death, to ask him about evidence suggesting more than one gun was fired at the murder scene.

Busch said, "The theory that there was a second attacker is complete nonsense. We have a witness who saw that Sirhan's weapon was at Kennedy's head."

Pressed by the *Stern* reporter to name the witness, Busch said, "It is Karl Uecker. He is our man. He lives now somewhere in Europe. For safety reasons we do not want to give out his residence."

Stern thereupon searched out Uecker, who was living in Dusseldorf. Uecker's statements to *Stern* were in complete contradiction to what Busch had said.

Uecker was a maitre d' at the Ambassador Hotel, where Kennedy was shot. He was leading Kennedy through the crowded hotel pantry, the murder scene, when the firing started, holding Kennedy's right hand in his left hand.

This is critical testimony, because the bullet that killed the Senator was fired at extremely close range, practically a contact wound. Uecker says flatly that Sirhan's revolver never got that close.

Uecker contends that he ought to know because, "the gun was right under my nose."

When Sirhan fired, Uecker dropped Kennedy's hand, grabbed Sirhan's gun arm, and got a headlock on him. He forced Sirhan's arm against the top of a buffet table. Sirhan kept firing from that position.

There was another gun in the room. It was a similar revolver in the hand of Eugene Cesar, a protection service guard.

Stern notes that, contrary to police practice everywhere, only the Sirhan weapon was seized when the cops reached the scene. The entire scene should have been searched for weapons, the magaine says, and any found there ought to have been impounded for testing.

Uecker says he insisted at the time of the shooting that Sirhan could not have pushed past him to get as close to Kennedy as the official theory placed him. He was told simply, "Karl, you are wrong."

The guard, Cesar, seems to have disappeared. He sold his revolver three months after the murder to a Jim Yoder, in Arkansas, says *Stern*, and Yoder says the weapon was stolen from him some time later. Cesar never testified. His gun was never examined.